

no democrat, no apostle of modern democracy, though* ms. phraseology sometimes sounds democratic enough, and though he undoubtedly gave an impulse to democratic progress. Nor would it be fair to expect this in a Protestant apostle, if he had not taken it upon him to lay down the law in things political as well as things religious. In the "First Book of Discipline" he indeed adjudges "the pepill" a voice in ecclesiastical affairs, and warmly champions the cause of the deserving poor, whom he distinguishes from "stubborne and idill beggars," and of popular education. He would have stood higher in our estimation if, as political writer, he had shown a larger sense of popular rights, and harped less on those of a malcontent nobility and middle class. The mass of the unprivileged might be the rascal multitude, but without the co-operation of this multitude he and his friends, the malcontent nobles, might have planned and prayed to domesday for the destruction of idolatry. Had the people arrayed itself behind the champions of the old creed, there would have been no reformation in Scotland or elsewhere—no reformation worth speaking of at least—however much a Knox might angle for the co-operation of a discontented and, in the case of too many of its members, a self-seeking aristocracy.

The conventional depreciation of the masses, into which John Knox sometimes slips, may be explained from the low social and intellectual level of the people in the Middle Ages. After centuries of serfdom and oppression, to which the masses were doomed, and the neglect of the Church to raise them to a higher social plane, the people might well appear politically a negligible quantity in Scotland as elsewhere ; its lot, for all time, that of hewers of wood and drawers of water to the classes above it. We need hardly be surprised, therefore, if its political existence was ignored by the apostles of the mighty revolution that was moulding the Western world and presaging future change. But was it only the people that was depraved? Were the ruling classes really much more enlightened ? Were they really more fit for political rights ? If the publicists of the age speak truly, it would be difficult indeed to answer in the affirmative. It might be easy to prove from a one-sided view of history that the instinct or the judgment of the multitude was perverse, brutal, and false.